

# The best you can be

How to approach your continuing professional development and future-proof your career



- What is CPD?
- What and how should you learn?
- Recording and submitting your CPD
- Learning support from the EI

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## Introduction



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All professions – from doctors to lawyers, architects to engineers - require practitioners to keep their knowledge, skills and practice up to date.

Competence – the ability to undertake tasks safely, efficiently and effectively - is fundamental to professional life and indeed to a profession's reputation.

Energy is no different. It's a vast sector, encompassing many roles and specialisms. We energy professionals operate in a complex and fast changing world; our roles are often demanding and carry considerable responsibility – for the sustainable use of resources, for the environment, for public health and safety and for producing the power on which society so fundamentally depends.

A commitment to learning and development is all part of what being a professional means in the modern world. As the professional body that champions and supports those working within the energy sector and promotes good practice, the Energy Institute places Continuing Professional Development (CPD) at the centre of its requirements for individuals who wish to be professional members. Those who join the EI are expected to make an ongoing commitment to maintaining and developing their competence under the EI's Code of Professional Conduct and to supporting the development of others.

But CPD is about far more than rules and regulations. We believe that continuous learning and development is an essential part of helping individuals, their employers and the profession to be the best that they can be. Learning and development is a positive experience in itself, one that shapes careers and brings new opportunities, as well as job satisfaction.

We all know that things can sometimes be tough in energy. Staying on top of professional practice, adopting a curious, reflective approach to how we look at the world and our sector and making sure we keep learning and developing, are key to employability and making the most of how we spend our working lives.

We have produced this brief guide so that members understand clearly where the EI stands, what its expectations and procedures are and why CPD is so important. Most importantly it provides guidance on the things to think about to make CPD work for you.

If you have any questions, feedback or ideas on CPD, please don't hesitate to get in touch with members of the CPD Panel [cpd@energyinst.org](mailto:cpd@energyinst.org). We will be pleased to hear from you.

**“A commitment to  
learning and  
development is  
what being a  
professional means  
in the modern  
world”**

## What is CPD...?

If you have already joined the EI as a professional member you will probably remember that you were asked to demonstrate that you met particular standards of competence. You will have put together evidence of your work, and made a case to show that you were meeting the standards for the type of membership or registration you were applying for.

But competence is not a one-off event. It's something that needs to be maintained and developed so that you stay at the top of your game in a complex world, can move forward with your career and meet new challenges.

This is exactly what Continuing Professional Development – CPD - is all about. It is any activity that helps you maintain and develop your professional skills and competence.

One of the common misconceptions is that CPD is about courses, training events and conferences. Formal events are relevant and often very valuable, but they are just one way of developing your skills and knowledge. There are many other ways of maintaining your professional development. Indeed, the chances are that as your career advances you will find yourself gaining more from personal research, experience and collaboration with fellow professionals than from formal events. This is often overlooked because it forms part of "the day job" but it's a key part of how we develop as professionals and you should take credit for it.

Another is that CPD is all about input. Supporting others by sharing your knowledge and experience can also help you develop, refresh and reflect on your own understanding. So, managing and mentoring others, helping them achieve professional qualifications, or helping non specialists develop a better understanding of your area or energy in general - all of these can be part of CPD.

We change and develop throughout our career, and so does the way in which we gain knowledge, skills and experience. As long as it is relevant to you, your development needs and enhances your professional skills and knowledge, it's CPD.

**"If it's relevant to you, your development needs, and enhances your professional skills and knowledge, it's CPD"**

## ...And who is it for?

Some people think that there might be special cases that are exempt from needing to do CPD, ("I'm a Fellow"; "I've been in the business for 30 years", "I'm self-employed", "I'm too old").

CPD is for all. The world is changing all the time and knowledge and skills constantly need refreshing whoever you are.

Learning is not just at the heart of professional life, it is fundamental to the professional mind-set. If you are not keeping your skills and knowledge up to date, then it could cause your professionalism to be questioned.

## What are the EI's CPD requirements?

There is no great mystery about maintaining professional competence.

It's something most energy professionals naturally expect to do as a matter of course, but the Energy Institute sets out some basic guidelines to help you with the kinds of things you should be thinking about when planning and taking forward your professional development.

### The basics

As a professional member of the EI, you should be

- maintaining your CPD in a range of areas – your CPD shouldn't be concentrated on one topic,
- maintaining a continuous, up-to-date and accurate record of your CPD activities,
- undertaking a mixture of learning activities which:
  - are relevant to your current or future practice,
  - benefit the quality of your practice,
  - benefit the users of your work (employees, clients, the public etc.)
- adopting a reflective approach to your development.

In addition to their membership of the EI, many members also hold professional registrations that have been awarded by the EI under licence from bodies such as the Engineering Council, the Science Council or the Society for the Environment, or hold other approved statuses such as ESOS Lead Assessor.

If you hold one of these, you will need to bear in mind that these bodies have their own CPD requirements, which you will also need to abide by.

However, if you are meeting the broad guidelines described in this booklet, you are demonstrating that you understand what CPD is all about and are very likely to also be meeting the standards of these bodies too.

**"There is no great mystery about professional competence"**

## How many hours CPD should I be doing?

The EI does not state a minimum number of hours of CPD you need to undertake over a given period.

This is because hours spent do not necessarily equal value. For example, three hours spent at a training event is only valuable if the training was of good quality and relevant to your personal development needs. Instead, we encourage our members to think about what their needs are and then the outcome and value of an activity, for example what they gained, how it helped them move forward and the impact on their work.

Our CPD requirements do however require that there is a balance of topics covered and learning activities undertaken. We also ask members to explain the value they have got from the learning they undertake.



## What should my CPD cover?

As a practising professional, you know your development needs best, so it's up to you to make a judgment about what your needs are, and what specific CPD would benefit you most (there is more about planning your CPD later in this guide).

However you should make sure that the CPD you are undertaking is varied and balanced. In any given year you should cover topics which fall within at least **two** of the following broad CPD areas.

## CPD areas and topics

### A. Professionalism

This is learning focusing on matters to do with practising as an energy professional such as conduct and ethics, health and safety, environmental considerations and understanding the changing contexts of practice e.g. new legislation, societal or economic changes. It may also be about supporting other professionals e.g. through mentoring, involvement in your branch, committees and so on.

### B. Specialist knowledge and skills

This is learning in relation to the more technical aspects of your work and the context in which you are working or intend to work.

### C. Non-specialist knowledge and skills

This is about general professional skills, e.g. communication, training, managing change, and information technology

## What types of activity count towards my CPD?

CPD can include any activity which has helped you to take forward your development as a professional.

Again, it's up to you to decide on the most appropriate activities to develop your skills and knowledge according to the development needs you have identified, but these activities should also be balanced and varied so you should be involved in at least two learning activities from the following in any given year:

## Types of CPD activity:

### A. Work based learning

This could include taking on projects in new areas, working in new contexts or roles and reflecting on your experience

### B. Professional activity

This could include being involved in a professional body in some way e.g. as part of a branch, committee, panel or network, mentoring others or being mentored, offering/supervising work experience or taking part in careers work.

### C. Formal / Educational

This could include writing articles or papers, further education, training or qualifications, attending courses and conferences. It could also include upgrading your membership or registration.

### D. Self-directed learning

This is deepening your understanding through reading and research around a subject which could include reading journals, reviewing books / articles, internet research and so on.

### E. Other

This could include voluntary work or public service activities which have helped you to develop skills which you use in your professional life.



## What should I learn?

As we have already said, what you need to learn can depend on a range of factors. This will often be personal to you and your circumstances. Here are a few factors to consider:

Factor	Questions you might want to consider
What is going on in your role?	Is your role changing? Are you working on new projects or areas? Will you need new knowledge or to understand new techniques? Will you be working in a new context that you need to know more about? Does some aspect of your performance need more work?
What is going on in your organisation?	Are you restructuring? Upscaling? Downsizing? Refocusing? Moving into different markets? Using new technologies? If so, how are you affected? Will you need to develop or update your knowledge and skills to keep up to date in the wider organisation? How can you put yourself in the best position to stay effective and make a contribution as things move forward?
What is going on in the profession?	What are the big trends and micro trends in the sector as a whole and in your part of it? What do you need to do to keep your skills future-proof?
Are you still meeting professional and other standards?	When was the last time you checked the standards of competence for what you do? Should you now be considering other certifications or standards if you have progressed or moved into new areas?
What is going on in wider society?	Has there been new legislation? What have been the big news stories and developments that impact on your work? How is new technology affecting your work – for example, methods of communication?
How do you want to develop your future career?	Do you want to move into a new area? Broaden your experience? Go for promotion? What do you need to be able to know about or do to make the transition?
How do you want to develop outside work?	Are you planning to make changes in your life outside work? What do you need to do to put yourself in the best position to make those changes?

There are also a number of other reference points which can help you think about your development, including:

- Professional competences – referring to the requirements of your current professional status and registrations or ones you would like to work towards.
- Industry standards,
- Your organisation’s mission and strategy,
- Your job description and any appraisals or reviews,
- Trade press and specialist press journals, conferences and events.

### Keep talking

**It’s often helpful to discuss your development needs and the context of your work with your line manager, your network, or a mentor or trusted colleague to help you get new perspectives.**

### Be curious

**Try to read widely, and make time to reflect from time to time about what trends there are in the profession and what you currently do. Also think about what this could mean for you personally, and where you need to focus your efforts to make sure you are keeping up and at the top of your game.**

**Use this thinking to set yourself some goals for your development, to act as a guide to keep you on track.**

### Making your CPD relevant

If all of the above sounds like a lot of extra work on top of a busy day job then you are doing it wrong!

The purpose of CPD in the context of a professional body is that it should be highly relevant to you, your job and your value to your employer.

Let’s be clear - you are not undertaking this learning in order to keep the EI happy. The EI’s role is simply to help you organise, record and get the most out of your learning, help keep you up to date, and where we can, to recognise your achievements. You are the primary beneficiary of these activities.

Your development is an integral part of your day to day life. Most of us already need to maintain records, either to support annual appraisals, future promotions or to put into a CV - and all of us need to stay on top of what we do to maintain our value as professionals.

Ideally you should try and integrate your CPD into your annual appraisal or performance review if you can. If your CPD and work objectives are aligned it will help you make a case for your employer to invest in you, whether it be in time, funding or new opportunities for work which will give you experience to help you achieve your goals.

### Reviewing your learning and taking time to reflect

Whenever you undertake learning or gain new experience, it's important to take time to think about what you have done and how it has moved you forward.

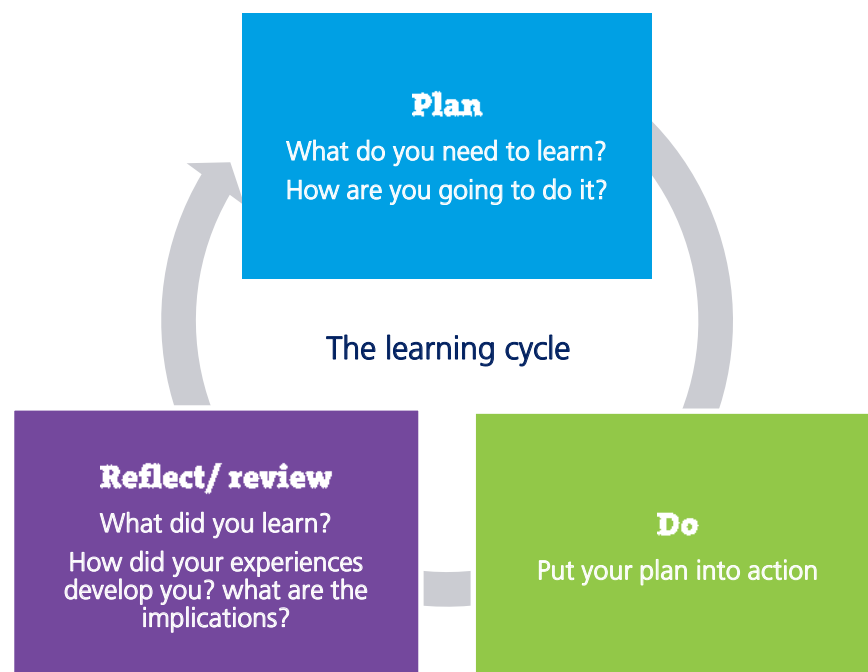
For example:

- What did you learn?
- How are going to apply your learning?
- Have you achieved your original goal or is there more you need to do? (Learning has a habit of highlighting other gaps in your skills and knowledge!)

This is called reflective practice. Being a reflective practitioner is a skill in itself and it's particularly important in sectors like energy where practice requires a great deal of expertise and the situations being dealt with on a day to day basis are complex. There is not necessarily going to be a blueprint for everything you do. Working effectively comes from a mix of knowledge skill and experience, including being willing to work as your own constructive critic, being open to new experiences and pushing yourself beyond your comfort zone.

Reflection may lead you to feel that you need to undertake some further learning or explore new areas. As time moves on your needs may be changing, so you will often find yourself back at the stage where you are identifying new areas for development.

This is what you may have heard some people call the learning cycle, of planning, doing, reflecting and reviewing. Making records as you go through this process will help your learning stick and keep you focused.



## Recording your CPD

If you are a professional member, you should be keeping full records of your CPD as part of your regular routine. The EI provides a range of tools to help you record your professional development and think about your learning.

### The EI CPD template

The EI CPD Template is a simple downloadable word template for recording your development. It includes guidance on what to record, how to record it and what to think about to produce an effective record in order to get the most out of your learning. You can download the template from the CPD section of the EI's website.

### MyCareerPath



MyCareerPath, is the EI's online professional development tool, which is free to members. It allows you to plan and log your professional experience in an easy to use electronic format. You can also use it to create reports to summarise your CPD at the end of each year or quarter. Your CPD is all stored in one place, so you can look back at what you have done previously. You can access MyCareerPath on your account on the EI [website](#).

### Other formats

We encourage members to use these tools to record their CPD, because they will help you record all you need to if you are asked to make a CPD submission, but alternative formats - for example those used by an employer or another professional body - are normally acceptable, provided that the **same information** is covered, including evidence of reflection. In particular, if you don't use the EI CPD template, it is important that you check your CPD record includes:

- a brief description of your work role,
- your professional development goals,
- details of a range of learning activities, covering a range of topics, including a description of what you learned and how you will (or already have) applied this.

Your CPD record needs to meet the CPD requirements set by the EI and any other body through which you hold a licence through the EI. There is more information about our CPD requirements earlier in this guide.

## Submitting your CPD

Each year the EI contacts a sample of members and asks them to submit a record of their CPD activity for the preceding calendar year – for example, in 2017 members were asked to submit records relating to 2016.

If you are one of those selected to take part, we will let you know at least six weeks before the deadline by which you will need to make your submission. We expect members to be keeping records of their CPD as a matter of course, and so hopefully a request from the EI to submit records as part of an annual CPD exercise should not present a problem.

There are a number of groups which, under particular licensing or other arrangements are always included in the annual CPD request. These include:

- all new professional members who have now been with the EI for a year,
- those holding ESOS Lead Assessor status,
- those who are registered as a Chartered Scientist.

The CPD requirements are such that you should be able to meet them regardless of whether you are currently in work. However, you can request an exemption for up to three years if you are

- on maternity leave,
- on long term sick leave,
- on a career break away from energy-related work.

If any of these apply to you, please let us know right away. Depending on the circumstances we may instead request that you submit your CPD record in the next calendar year.

## How the EI reviews CPD submissions

Following the deadline, the CPD Panel reviews the records which have been submitted by members.

This review is carried out on the basis of a sampling of submissions, and so not every record will be reviewed, but each year the Panel endeavours to review as many records as possible so that members get as much benefit as possible from the process.

The Panel reviews each record in accordance with the requirements set by the EI and/or the relevant Licensing Body (depending on the member grade, title or registration status held by the individual).

It then aims to provide constructive feedback and advice. You may receive individual feedback on your submission. Alternatively, you may be sent a copy of the annual CPD report, which gives more general feedback and advice on submissions received in a particular year. Our staff team will also be happy to provide information and advice, and discuss your submission with you.

## Records not meeting the requirements

**If your record is one of those reviewed by the Panel and the Panel feel that your submission does not meet the relevant requirements, they will give you written feedback. If appropriate, and in particular if you hold a registration for which submission is mandatory, you may also be given a date by which any issues must be addressed.**

## Mandatory registers

All members of the EI must keep their skills and knowledge up to date through undertaking CPD, but the submission of CPD records is mandatory if you hold some particular types of professional registration.

Those holding CSci status, and those who are approved to act as Lead Assessors for ESOS are required to make annual submissions of their CPD.

### Chartered Scientists

Under requirements set by the Science Council, Chartered Scientists must submit a CPD record on request, and in years where they are not asked to submit a record, confirm in writing their ongoing understanding and compliance with the Science Council's CPD standards, including that they are actively maintaining their competence.

### ESOS Lead Assessors

Under the requirements set by the Environment Agency, all EI approved ESOS Lead Assessors must make a CPD submission every year as a condition of their continuing approval to act as an ESOS Lead Assessor. The Environment Agency has set a number of additional requirements for those that hold this status, including a minimum number of CPD hours relevant to ESOS, and that two specific learning objectives are stated each year.

If you hold either of these statuses, and we either:

- do not receive a record from you by the deadline for submission, or
- a satisfactory record is not received following individual feedback given to you by the Panel

The CPD Panel will refer the matter to the EI's Professional Affairs Committee. This will normally be with a recommendation that you should be removed from the relevant register, or in the case of Chartered Scientists, should forfeit Chartered status. If this is the case you will be advised of the PAC's decision in writing, and provided with details of the EI's Appeals Procedure.

### Engineering Council Registrations

From January 2019, the submission of records of CPD on request also becomes mandatory for those holding Engineering Council registrations. Under Engineering Council requirements, from 2020, if you fail to submit a record on request, you risk removal of your professional registration following referral to the EI's Professional Affairs Committee.



## Learning support from the EI

The EI offers a range of support to members looking to keep their knowledge and skills up to date in the fast changing world of energy.

### Professional Membership and Registration

We offer a range of professional titles, registrations and designations to help you demonstrate that you are meeting the standards that the public and employers expect.

### Training and events

We offer extensive training in a range of energy topics including oil and gas, safety, risk management and energy management, and a full programme of industry events and seminars through the year.

### EI Knowledge Service

Your membership includes free access to knowledge and research resources, a constantly growing one-stop shop for information about energy topics including Good Practice, Guidance, Policy Documents and e-Books.

### Branches and the Young Professionals Networks (YPNs)

Our branches and the Young Professionals Networks act as networking and professional development hubs in the UK and beyond.

### New Energy World

New Energy World, the EI's digital magazine covers the whole energy system, from the dynamics under way in conventional oil and gas through to fast-paced developments in low-carbon technology, and everything in between.

### My Career Path

A free-to-members online tool for recording your development towards qualifications, and your Continuing Professional Development throughout your career.

### The CPD logo

You will often see this logo on the EI's events, training courses, publications and products.

The CPD logo indicates that the event, course or resource can count towards a varied programme of Continuing Professional Development.

This means that it has been specially designed as a quality product to help members in their learning and development. You should normally combine it with other activities over the year to give you a good range of development overall.

We are happy to provide certificates for courses or events you attend with the EI – just email us.



## Further information

For more information on professional development at the EI, visit <https://www.energyinst.org/membership-and-careers/cpd>

For information on the EI's classroom and online training courses, visit <https://www.energyinst.org/whats-on/training>

To become a member of the EI, and gain access to a host of resources to support your professional development, plus discounts on events and training courses, visit: <https://www.energyinst.org/membership-and-careers/membership>







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